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Plan Of I. F. Stone

Journalist Urges U.S. Act to End Break With Cuba

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(Capital Times Washington Correspondent)

WASHINGTON — "It is harder to talk reasonably about Cuba and Fidel Castro than about any other subject in this town," the well-known liberal journalist I. F. Stone told a gathering of some 400 hardy souls who packed the basement of a Congregationist church here.

He spoke the obvious. Over at the Pan-American Union, Secretary of State Rusk was twisting the arms of Latin countries, trying to get unanimous agreement to cut off trade and traffic with Cuba that everybody admitted didn't amount to a hill of frioles.



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The District of Columbia Sanitation Department was still tidying up after an odd riot staged by Cuban exiles who seemed bent on tearing apart Organization of American States diplomats until mounted police and motorcycle cops lustily beat them back.

Stone urged that the U. S. make peace with Castro and he offered two basic reasons for the move:

First, on a practical basis, "neither we nor the exiles have a program to offer the Cuban people." It would be impossible to overturn all the reforms — particularly the land reforms — and reinstate the United Fruit Co.

Assassination of Castro or an invasion landing would only lead to civil war and a lengthy occupation of Cuba by U. S. troops, he said.

Second, "we cannot support fascism abroad and avoid it at home." The Cuban exiles who were followers of Batista presently "have the strongest pull with the CIA and State Department." "Distortions by the press and by politicians have cause the American people to become "paranoid" about Cuba.

It has led, he said, to the burying of the fact that many of the bad tendencies in Cuba have been caused by U. S. hostility that forced the Castro government to look to Russia for survival.

It has obscured the extraordinary independence Castro has shown toward both the U. S. and the USSR. Stone saw Castro as seeking to become the "Tito of the Caribbean."

And it has lent support to the "specter of fascism at home, which is grown even stronger since the recent events in San Francisco."

He called upon the Johnson administration to make Cuba an "education to our people" and "proof to the world of our national maturity."

He proposed that William Donovan, the former OSS chief who negotiated the prisoner exchange after the Bay of Pigs invasion, be sent to Havana to work out a plan for the U. S. property

owners whose holdings had been confiscated.

At the same time, U. S.-Cuba trade would be resumed, so that Cuba could earn the dollars with which to pay reparations.

"An honorable return" would be guaranteed those Cuban refugees who wished to go back.

As for communist influences in Cuba, Stone felt sure they would diminish and cease if normal relations were restored. "Cuba is one of the few places in Latin America where Americans were — and still are — genuinely like."

He and the other speaker on the program — Dave Dellinger, editor of the pacifist publication "Liberation" — expressed hope the current tours of Cuba being made by a large delegation of U. S. property past distortions and ease tensions.

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